

I don't have to tell you that Americans are frustrated with their government. There is a deep and unfortunate cynicism toward the institution of Congress. The media adds to the drama by 24-hour reporting on all the various aspects of Washington infighting and dysfunction.

However, on Monday, we paused. We appropriately acknowledged one of our finest traditions – the public swearing in of our president. As is customary, I was seated with other Members of Congress on the platform in front of the United States Capitol. I was about 50 feet away from President Obama, looking out at the sea of people who traveled to Washington for the inaugural ceremony.

It was a solemn occasion, yet also light-hearted. For a moment, the country put itself beyond its deep philosophical policy divide and reattached itself to the idea that we transfer power peacefully through elections.

At its heart, America is a country of people who self-govern. Our government finds its authority based upon the consent of the governed. No matter the outcome, we come together to celebrate the concept that all power is temporary and transitional - and that responsible governance must be our guide.

As I entered the platform, I passed the U.S. Army Ceremonial Band in their crisp, formal, blue and gold uniforms. They provided the ceremonial interludes with trumpet blasts and drum rolls. Along with my fellow Members of Congress, we acknowledged the arrival of former Presidents Jimmy Carter and Bill Clinton and the Supreme Court Justices prior to the entrance of the Vice President and the President. The formality reflects our collective respect for the American governing tradition.

In his speech, the President remarked the oath of office is not dissimilar to the oath taken by our military officers, and it even parallels our own Pledge of Allegiance. We say the words so often that we may forget the true meaning.

In spite of the deep political divide and debate in our country, which will return soon enough, the inauguration was an important occasion to reconnect to our most important traditions.

Fort Report: A Few Thoughts on the Inauguration

January 25, 2013

I took some photos at the inauguration ceremony, which you can view on my [Facebook page](#) . I hope you enjoy [looking at them](#)

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